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D MIRIAM

FREDERICK HOUK LAW

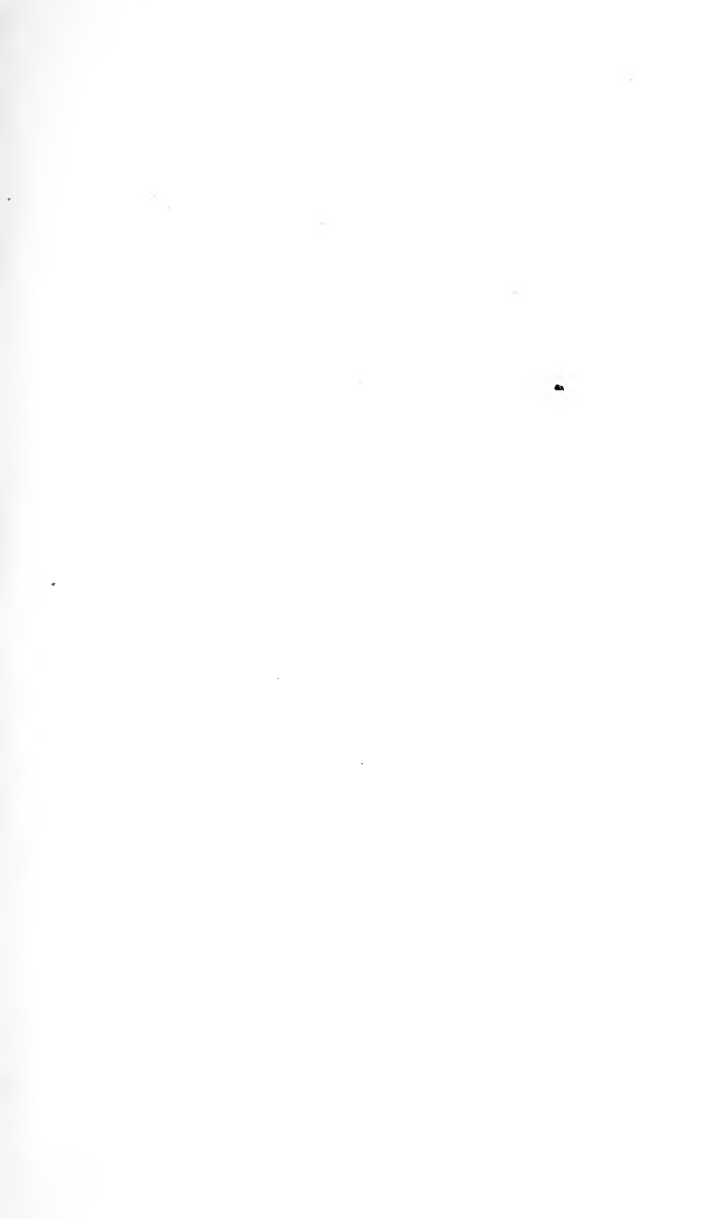


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Ad Miriam

By
Frederick Houk Law



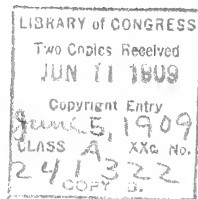
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The Knickerbocker Press, New York

UNDER a dull gray sky of lead
The gray sea rears a cold white reef
And moans and moans,—and I moan my dead
In dolorous pain and grief.

Bending the grass the wild wind cries
As it races under the sky,
And I look at the storm with aching eyes
And think of the days gone by.

The rain is aslant and the sand is sharp
And the pools are filled with the risen tide,
And a master hand is touching the harp
With a dolorous strain that none may abide.

The gulls and curlews all are fled,
And the rain is sharp and keen and cold,
And the sky is gray like a sky of lead,
And the world is centuries old.

A ship is beating slowly out to sea,
Breasting the storm that tears the main,
And some in the ship are sailing free
To their own true loves again.

But never in calm nor ever in gale
Crossing the wild, wild main,
Can I sail as I would sail
To my own true love again.

AD MIRIAM

I

WHERE the river winds among the meadows,
And the wooded hilltops rise on high;
Where the snow is pure and deep all winter
Underneath a calm, protecting sky;
Where in summer one must walk and wander
Over nodding pastures sweet and white:
Yea—must climb to where the lofty woodland
Holds its glades of dim and prayerful light,
There she sleeps in peace, with nature's music
Breathing o'er the hilltop where she lies,
Sleeps, and sleeps in peace, in sun or shadow,
While to her my longing spirit flies.

II

A LITTLE child with curling hair,
A little girl with cheeks rose-red,
A little heart untouched by care.
Unheard by me some spirit said:
"Those bright brown eyes shall look in thine;
Those curving lips shall meet with thine;
That happy heart shall beat with thine;
That dainty soul shall grow with thine."

I watched her moving down the street
And saw no other child than her;
The heart within me beat and beat
And all my spirit felt the stir
As if the deep had called to deep,
As when within some lonely view
One feels the longing spirit leap
To God who breathes it through and through.

The sunlight touched her hair with gold;
The frosty air lit up her face,
And over all my being rolled
A half-felt awe that fixed the place,—

Ad Miriam

The rounded maples, tall and straight,
The street, the school with walls of white,
And left it pictured clear as fate,
As fate, or God, or love can write.

I scarce had learned to speak her name;
I could not dare to dream of more;
Yet there beneath the trees first came
The love my years have wondered o'er,—
The love of youth and youth's sweet face,
The love of deeper life and zest,
The love of spirit's charm and grace,
The full-set love that made me blest.

III

O WHAT is love that means so much,
Whose power and life are never done,
Which draws two spirits into one,—
Two lonely spirits into touch?

'T is like a chord of music sent
From brighter realms that lie afar;
Or like the bond that holds our star
Within the studded firmament.

It is the call of God to man
To join with Him in things divine;
It knows no earthly boundary line
Nor moves in fixed and temporal span.

It is a link that binds our time,
Our passion-driven human heart,
Our groping world of thought and art,
With what is timeless and sublime.

O Lord, our thanks are all too small
For love and all its story means,
For perfect human love,—it leans,
O Lord, upon the All-in-All.

IV

THE child I loved long years ago
Has gone,—and I would have it so,—
For who would always be a child?
Long years I watched her spirit grow,
And year by year I learned to know
That self is always self exiled
From that which *was*, the day before.
The tale of life is not told o'er
In one dull round of work and play.
True life increases more and more
And adds unto the spirit's store
A something sweet and new each day.
If she had always been the same
How dull and meaningless and tame
The tale of life for her had been!
She perished day by day,—a flame
That built itself anew and came
To have new brightness from within.
I felt no loss, because I saw,
And knew that change is nature's law,
And loved her more the more she grew.
So now this comfort I can draw:
This change that fills me so with awe
Is life gone on to something new.

Ad Miriam

And so it is I love her still
And feel my soul more keenly thrill
 With love of that which is new-born.
Nor can I rashly deem it ill
That thus her life its plans fulfil
 That usher in her better morn.

V

WE fall on sleep each night
And with the morning light
We wake anew.

Our lives are but a day,
And after work and play
We go from view.

From varied scenes we know,
With breathings soft and low,
We drift asleep.

We do not fear to die,
And friends shall by and by
No longer weep.

We know that death's black pall
Is not the end of all,
But merely rest.

Beyond this life of men,
Dear Heart, we 'll meet again,
And that is best.

VI

ONE day we drifted down the stream,
The shadowed, willow-haunted stream
Whereon the peace of God did lie,
And in the waters gleamed the sky,
And in their depths the shadowed hill.
From far beyond, the distant mill
Sent forth a low and sleepy sound,
And all the waving meadow-ground
Was steeped in August's sun and heat.
From every side we heard repeat
The shrill cicala's song, and then,
When all was still, repeat again.
Throughout that summer's happy day
O'er all our pleasant, winding way
A sense of harmony was sent
As earth and sky in music blent.
But *she* was there to make the view
The view it seemed, the sky more blue,
The song more sweet, life more divine,
Earth's soul in closer touch with mine.

VII

I FEEL that thou art with me still,
Thy hand in mine,—
And so I try to do thy will,
And half divine
Thy presence when I do the right.
I feel thee near
When simple prayer is raised each night.
I trust thy ear
Is still attuned to hear and know,
Whate'er betide,
I love thee still where'er I go,
My present bride.

VIII

WHAT lies beyond the last-drawn breath,
O solemn, solemn fact of death?
What lies beyond?

The curtains do not swing aside;
No message comes from o'er the tide;
What lies beyond?

Will nothing surely speak and say?
Must I in faith's sweet silence pray?
What lies beyond?

But silence stands aghast and still,
Brute silence, question as I will.
What lies beyond?

IX

FOUR mighty facts of life I know
On which creation swings,
Four facts by which our spirits grow,
Round which our being clings.

And one is birth through mother's pain,—
Oh joyous thing and sad!
And whence—oh, who can make it plain,
Our birth in mystery clad?

And one is love that moulds in one
Two souls that long to meet,
But whence the heart's far-shining sun
With all its comfort sweet?

And one is holy parent-hood
That greets a kindred soul,
But why and whence this wondrous good,
And what its distant goal?

And one is death,—so hard to bear,—
So sure ahead of all;
What is this thing that all must share?
What lies beyond its call?

Ad Miriam

These mighty facts are veiled indeed,
And never understood,
Though in our simple faith and need
We trust that all are good.

X

HOW oft by happy hill and stream
With her I walked in one glad dream!
How many times the nodding flowers,
The whole gay world of earth was ours!
The hills and groves were our retreat;
The rivers made for converse sweet.
Within our own secluded place
Each year we loved to meet and trace
The happy steps of times gone by,
For love may grow but never die.
And oft, beneath the friendly trees,
We felt our beings reach and seize
And be in touch with something good
That moved its spirit through the wood.
Then hand in hand we felt each soul
In touch with that that guides the whole,
And there in shadow and in sun
With God and love we were at one.

XI

A T times I cannot write;
I sit alone,
Outstaring part of night,
And make my moan
Among the shadows black.
With all my soul
I long to call her back.
Then o'er me roll
Such nameless doubt and fear
That tear-drops fall
In dread she cannot hear
My longing call.
Of what avail is life
If one so sweet,
Companion, Mother, Wife,
May never greet
The ones who loved her well?
O starry sky,
Do changing systems tell
That all must die?
Or does a world of law
Proclaim a Mind
So great it gives us awe
And strikes us blind

Ad Miriam

To fear and doubting thought;
That makes it plain
That He whose wisdom wrought
Will not disdain
To make our lives complete;
Whose ordered plan
Will fill our prayer to meet
Beyond the world of man?

XII

HOW like a child am I in what I know!
How like a child who wonders what and why!
Who sees a something blue and calls it sky;
Who thinks that all there is of earth below
Is gathered where the homeland rivers flow;
Whose petty griefs call forth an anguished cry;
Whose whole round world is held by "me" and
"my";
Who scarce has learned that he must live and grow!

O Lord, in grief I pray thee, teach me right
To see in part how great thy plans can be,
How large thy universe for work and play;
To trust in those whose wiser, fuller sight
Has caught a glimpse of lands beyond our sea
Of time, where men may work in brighter day.

XIII

HOW close her spirit wrought with mine!
From many a poet's happy line
We drew the same unending dream;
From many a tale we caught the gleam
Of swords and spears and armor bright
And beacon-fires that roused the night.
We lived in many a man's career
And shared with him his hopes and fear;
We read of many a pleasant place
Where men delight in nature's grace;
We did the dull and daily task:—
So one were we I dare to ask:
Will God so separate a heart,
So tear a human soul apart,
That nevermore we two shall meet
Nor hold our pleasant converse sweet?

O Love, it must be thou dost hear,
And hearing, still art near and dear!

XIV

OUR sunny dreams once looked ahead
And planned the days to be;
By dreams I still can see
An autumn foliage bright and red;

A road that wound its upward way,—
A pleasant path to tread,—
A winding road that led
Among the meadows, lone and gray.

We climbed the fence and lay at rest
The while the sloping ray
That marks the close of day
Came down upon us from the west.

We talked of what the years would bring
With love and labor blest,
And that which was the best,—
Our common joy in everything.

And lo ! our lives fulfilled the dream:
Within a magic ring
We heard the fairies sing
By many a love-lit mead and stream.

Ad Miriam

For death itself we tried to plan,
To catch a happy gleam
From out the pale, pale beam
That falls upon the world of man.

Shall not our souls that dream fulfil,—
A hope since time began,
The stream of death to span,
And prove that Love is ruler still?

XV

ONE day we two by fair Lake Placid lay,
 Ringed round by misty mountains dim and
 gray.

Far off and dim the great peaks lifted high
 Their solemn faces, praying, toward the sky.
 The whole wide scene within that circle's sweep,
 The lake and silent woods and blue, blue deep
 Of sky, was filled with that which made us know
 That we were one with mighty streams that flow
 Throughout the universe. In that glad time
 The simple, common things became sublime.
 The mighty soul that interfuses all,
 Whose voice is in the birds' ecstatic call,
 Whose breath is in the wind that wanders free,
 Whose smile is sunlight over land and sea,
 Whose Self is deep imprest in hills that rise
 Far-reaching, grand, and still, to touch the skies,—
 That mighty Soul we felt was with us there,
 And that it was that made the scene so fair.
 Within that spell of charm we drew so near
 In soul, so needed each by each, so dear,
 That then there came upon us like a light
 Belief that love does not pass into night
 But that it goes to be a living part
 Of all that is, and somehow, heart to heart,
 In radiant sunset light or farthest star,
 Has share in building up the things that are.

XVI

MY present, dear, to thee
This Christmas Eve,—
As thou would'st have it be,—
Is not to grieve
That thou hast gone away
And left me lone;
It is to do and say
What shall atone
For lack of thee this night,—
What thou would'st do:
To make our boy's heart light—
“Our Little Boy Blue.”

XVII

NOW is the time when the merry bells ring,
Spreading their echoes of cheer;
Dear to my heart are the thoughts that they bring,
Echoes of many a year,—
Echoes of laughter that sounds nevermore,
Echoes of songs that are still.
Glad were the sounds that the merry bells bore,
Ringing by river and hill.
Still, if the Maker's high purpose I knew,—
Knew of His dealings with men,—
Christmas would echo the Good and the True
And Christmas be Christmas again.

XVIII

THE gift that Christmas brings to thee
Is higher life than mine,—
A life more full, more glad, more free,
Than e'er before was thine.

I would, dear heart, that thou could'st give
Some part of that to me,
That I the more might learn to live
And grow to be like thee.

XIX

THERE were two deaths that came to me:
The death of half my soul that died in her;
The death of my old self that used to be.

As if two angels came to stir
The stagnant pool of life and make it clean,
These two have waked us both to better life.

For she has waked to life unseen,
Though real and filled with toil and noblest strife,
To do God's work within a higher field.

And I have waked to serious mind,
To learn the hopes that nobler aims can yield,
With most of all my weaker self behind.

XX

SAY once in happy days of old
Some princess blithe and gay,
In childhood's beauty manifold,
Had gone some summer's day
To sunny fields of nodding bloom.
'Mong flowers and grasses tall
A happy boy,—or page or groom,—
Had come at childhood's call.
It might have seemed to common eye
That both were one in kind,—
In health, in youth, in charms that vie
With charms to make one blind
To that which lies more deep beneath.
But when in after-time
Our little lady's royal wreath
Had blossomed into rhyme,
And men bent low before their queen,
That other,—squire or knight,—
Would be in rank and state too mean
To be her heart's delight.
Yet at her feet in homage true
Her childhood friend might kneel
And be among the chosen few
For whom her heart could feel.

Ad Miriam

Dear love, thou art beyond me now
In soul and life and all,
Yet when to thee my love I vow
I hear thy silent call.
I will thy cherished plans fulfil;
Thy work shall now be mine;
For I, in heart and mind and will,
Am more than ever thine.

XXI

THEY say that once God spoke with man
Within a garden cool and bright,
And on a mountain's lofty span
Himself gave forth the laws of right.
But this I know: God speaks to-day
And lives within us hour by hour.
Each flower that nods beside our way,
Each living thing, proclaims His power.
His soul is interfused with all;
The sacred thing that we call life
In mosses green or grasses tall,
The haunts of wild and brutish strife,
The poet's soul that looks afar,
The laws that hold all things in place,
The sweep of each majestic star,
The power, beauty, music, grace,
Is simply God in all that is.
If we could know Him more and more
Our lives would be more wholly His;
Then He would speak as long before
He spoke to holy men and true;
Then we, with thought that God is near,
Would gain the joys that once we knew
And lose our sorrows and our fear.

XXII

SOME say that brutish souls shall die,
That beast is merely beast,
That only those godlike and high
Shall taste of life's eternal feast.

Yet power is power, and has no end,
Though changed in form it be,
And wisdom says that all things tend
To higher things than those we see.

If so, then life goes on as well
In changing wheels of light,
And none can surely guess nor tell
What cycles lie beyond our sight.

What we in blindness call the low
May well become the high,
And that which seems most brutish, grow
Divine beneath another sky.

Then those whose lives are perfect here
Are blest in truth and deed,
And must advance from sphere to sphere
As spirit fills the spirit's need.

Ad Miriam

Oh Love, thy growth indeed is sure;
Thy soul was all divine;
Thou livest still, as sweet and pure
As when thy life made joy for mine.

XXIII

OUR duties bore us oft apart,
And yet the swift hours flew
Till we together drew
And were no longer far apart.

But now thou hast a nobler work:
Not always can'st thou be
In loving watch by me:
Thou hast a better, nobler work.

And yet at times, Sweetheart, I know,
Since thou hast yet thy will,
Thy arms are round me still,
Thy heart in tune with mine, I know.

XXIV

MEN ask me whence I gain belief
That death is but a dark-hued veil
That hides a view of mountain and of dale
That lies fair-spread beyond our grief.

I draw it from the Buddha's speech;
I catch it from the swinging flash and sheen
That lit Mohammed's sword, verse-cut and keen;
From what the Zend-Avestas teach;

From mummies wrapped in loving hope
That bright-eyed life would dawn again;
From Christ, whose life so nobly taught us men
That we in darkness need not grope;

From naked Indians round their fire;
From Greek and pagan, bond and free,
By mountain, lake, and boundless reach of sea;
From all men's common, deep desire.

I pin my faith upon no man
Nor fix it in a single race;
I dare to hope that God has given grace
That all may dimly see His plan.

XXV

I THINK of One among Judean hills,
Whose face was lit with wondrous light,
Who felt that loving Godhood fills
All things with sense of love and right.

I see Him touch the lily's slender cup,
Or watch the chirping sparrows fly;
I see Him take the children up;
I see Him touch the blind man's eye;

I see Him on the vast expanse alone
Where angel dreamings came and went;
Or in a garden making moan
With wearied heart and spirit spent.

No other man this toiling world has seen
Communed more close with God than He;
He saw Him by the meadows green;
He knew Him there in Galilee;

He saw Him in the hearts of fishing men,
And felt Him by the common way:
He said the dead would live again
Though forms we know shall turn to clay.

Ad Miriam

This Master-soul in whom God's spirit dwelt
Taught living truth in all He said,
Through Him our weeping world has felt
That much of death's great fear has fled.

I put my trust in Him, whose kindly eyes
Saw more than simple, common things;
Round whom, so good, and kind, and wise,
Our deepest life forever clings.

XXVI

A THOUSAND prophets God has sent
In many a land and time;
In speech, and tale, and rhyme,
With common things their words are blent.

The wandering bard and poet-king
And monk in cloistered pale
In dim, secluded dale,
At heart alike one message bring:

That they who nobly die like men,
Whose lives were good and strong,
Who fought the false and wrong,
May surely hope to live again.

XXVII

IT cannot be that I have lost thee, dear!
Expectant still, I wait to hear
Thy wonted voice in pleasant, gentle call;
To hear thy wonted footsteps fall
In music round the house as once before.
Oh never, never, nevermore
To stand with thee and see thee face to face
With bright-lit eye and woman's grace!
It cannot be thy voice is silent now,
Thy ear is deaf to hear my vow!
Oh, not enough is it on hope to feed:
Thy human self is what I need.
I hope and trust, but still I grieve for thee:
Thy human self was dear to me.
I long to hear thy voice, to touch thy hand,
To see thee walk, and sit, and stand;
To wake with greeting thee at morning's light,
To say to thee my last good-night.
Sweetheart, dear love, for thee unnumbered tears
Shall fall throughout the lonely years;
For thee my life shall wear a pall of black
And every wish still call thee back.

XXVIII

I KNOW that thou art more than mind,
But what nor how, I do not know:
To many things God makes us blind,
But gives us hope that we shall grow.

We flash our thoughts across the sea
That once the lone storm-petrel bore:
With forms unseen they leave the key;
They fade as if forevermore.

All things are clad in forms of grace,
And forms but change to forms again;
They speed with matter, time, and space
Until once more they speak to men.

Our senses five are all too small
To know much more than smallest part
Of what makes up the all-in-all
Of great creation's beating heart.

Our God will kindly clothe his dead,
For that we sow shall rise anew;
Some form thou hast,—as Paul once said,—
Some radiant form myself shall view.

Ad Miriam

But I, like you, must put aside
The heavy, toil-worn robes I wear,
The clinging masks that hold and hide,
To don the garments new and fair.

XXIX

IN solitude among the hills,
With forests all around,
I hear the wind's great organ sound,
And through my being thrills
A sense of other things
Than those the peopled valley brings.

The distant, purple-shaded line
Where earth and heaven meet,
The pleasant woodland's calm retreat,
The slender, whispering pine,
To him who walks the wood
Proclaim that all of earth is good.

A mighty soul we learn to know
In friendly bush and tree,
On far-off hilltops lone and free
Where God's sweet organs blow
Their notes that never cease,
Among the woodlands filled with peace.

The lonely, potent hilltops tell
That love is lord of earth,
That beauty, goodness, charm, and worth,
In happiness may dwell,
Assured that over all
God hears the heart's supremest call.

XXX

THEY sleep until the Judgment Day,
The wise ones used to say,
And Heaven's glories lie afar
Beyond the farthest star.

But God rests not beyond the sky:
He toils with us who die,
With daily wonders manifold
As in the days of old.

They wake at once with work to do
In meadows fair and new,
For Heaven lies in realms so near
Its splendors light us here.

XXXI

IN cycles all untold
The plastic germs have grown,
While types on types unfold
To better things than known.

No form so vile and low,
So steeped in brutish thought,
But years may watch it grow
To best that God has wrought.

No sin so vile and deep
But he who sinned may turn
To where God's planets sweep
And stars celestial burn.

Help me, O God, to rise
Beyond the self I leave,
That I with better eyes
Seek her for whom I grieve.

XXXII

IF one who fell could never rise
How sad this world would be!
Dear Heart, in loving thee
I look upon the starry skies.

Until thy soul took heavenly wing
And left me lone, dear Love,
With all my thoughts above,
I scarce had heard God's angels sing.

The gates that thou hast entered in
Have let their golden light
Across my clouded night
Of carelessness and sin.

Perhaps God's message came to thee
That I, with tear-stained face,
Might seek His kindly grace,
And thou in dying die for me.

XXXIII

IT seems so strange that thou should'st die,
Whose life was young and good:
My faith must help me answer why,
Though dimly understood.

I know thou hast not died in vain:
Some purpose God has wrought,
To link thy life in golden chain
With some creative thought.

Link me, dear Love, within thy bond,
That I may work with thee
And help the world to look beyond
The day-work's restless sea.

XXXIV

THE last of all my gifts was roses, dear,
The last of all my gifts to thee,
For thou did'st scatter roses many a year
In all the days thou wert with me.

Thy memory still is like a scented rose
Whose odors fill a pleasant room,
And where the sweetest roses grow, God knows,
There is no shadowed place for gloom.

O sweetest rose that in my garden grew,
With thee my sunny hours have flown,
With thee the sunrise light and morning dew,
The brightest hours that I have known.

XXXV

HOW proudly weak and pale she stood
To hush the baby's cry!
O radiant smile of motherhood!
O tender, love-lit eye!

A thousand sunsets' golden flame
United all in one
Were not one half the charm that came
The while she rocked her son.

A Tintoretto's glorious art
Would own itself defied:
So pale and weak, so rich in heart,
So filled with mother's pride.

O burdened arms so kind and true!
O face so sweet to see!
Her soul with love thrilled through and through,—
She held her arms to me.

How pale the love in stories told
By minstrels old and gray!
For mother-love is writ in gold
And told in angels' way.

XXXVI

THE rose-hung years their perfume shed,
The light of dawn was fair ahead:
O rosy light and perfumed years
Still sweet across the mist of tears!
The gates of life were hung with flowers,
And all the gay, light-hearted hours
To silken strings sang love-to-be
When Love's sweet self should dwell with me.

To some the golden tale seems done,—
Passed by,—with Rome and Carthage one,—
Remote as mummies wrapped in gold,
Or dreams unique by poets told.

Yet what if years that fade away
But scatter dust upon the clay,
And every day that dawns in light
Remove the vision from my sight?
The while my soul exists in me
My love shall live, dear Heart, for thee.

XXXVII

THE New Years still are glad for me:
Sweetheart, they bring me nearer thee!

XXXVIII

O H, crisp and cold the winter's air,
And bright and fair
Her cheeks with health and young delight.
The ground, snow-white,
Was pure as if for angels' feet,
While o'er the street
The frosted trees an archway made
Where frost-light played.
The floating crystals danced and gleamed
As if there streamed
Through all the air a fairy train
With giddy brain
And filmy dress of jewelled lace.
And on her face
The radiant light of love and youth:
Oh, sweet as Ruth
At toil among the Syrian wheat!
Old songs repeat
Their tales of beauty's charm and dower,
Of Helen's power,
And royal maids neath charm and spell.
But none can tell
Such tales as love-lit living eyes!
The winter skies
Arched bright above the valley's cup,
And lifted up

Ad Miriam

Above the vale the forests rose
As if to close
The world in purple fit for kings.
Each New Year brings
The glinting, happy scene again
As fresh as when
The wandering breeze each curling tress
With sweet caress
Blew back and forth as if to kiss.
Oh, sweetest bliss
To walk each New Year's Day with thee,
And careless, free,
Untrammelled, note but half the scene,
But more, I ween,
Of thee! O brown eyes deep and true,
What angels drew
Your light on me! O comrade sweet,
May years repeat
Our New Year's walk with hearts as near
And love as dear
As if blue skies were o'er us still.
With Heaven's will
My heart each year shall still be thine,
Forever thine.

XXXIX

WITH many a streaming tear,
O dearest sweet and fair,
I fold the empty air
In arms that ache for thee!
With vainly longing ear
I sit and strive to hear
Some gentle call from thee!
O voiceless, empty air!
O dearest sweet and fair!
With many a streaming tear!

XL

SWEETHEART, whom every wish still calls to me,
How often have I prayed to dream of thee,
For happy dreams can make thee live again
And for a moment make my sorrows flee.

Last night, in dreams, I moved among a crowd
Where people spoke with voices gay and loud,
When suddenly I found myself with thee,
And thought that I had dreamed of pall and shroud.

And sudden joy like that of warming wine
Sprang through my veins; I took thy hand in mine
And said: "I lost thee once, but now I 'll hold
Thee fast and keep my hand in touch with thine."

Thy face was lit with more than wonted light,—
And calmness filled my hungry soul at sight
Of thee, so radiant, beauteous, sweet, and fair,
Amidst the moving crowd that filled the night.

And then, at sight of one whose face was dear,
You sprang away, and I with many a fear
Sought long in vain to find thee once again,—
And woke to find myself alone and here.

Ad Miriam

Mayhap the while my body lay in sleep
My soul was somehow near the vasty deep,
So near that thou couldst come and take my hand
And bid me for a moment cease to weep.

I cannot prove that this sweet thought is true,
But earth has much to learn of strange and new,
And this I know: If thou couldst come to me
'T is what thy loving heart would bid thee do.

XLI

THROUGH all the world a vast, sweet music
plays,

So vast, so calm, so sweet that it can raise
The soul of him who hears to be with God,
Who sends his music over all our ways.

And grief is like a spell that holds us still
And lets us hear the harmonies that fill
The higher mind of man and join his soul
In bond of trust with God's eternal will.

And in our grief we hear great poets tell
How they, in grief, once felt the soothing spell
Of that great stillness sorrow brings to men,
And heard God's music chime that all is well.

God's harmonies of life are sweet to hear,
Though we at first lend dull, impatient ear,—
Unending love, unending life the theme,
Unending love,—and not a cause for fear.

XLII

THE loving thought and care
That people give
To those who live,
Upholds from black despair;

For sympathy is sweet:
If understood,
Its brotherhood
Would prove the All-Complete.

XLIII

I LOOK among your letters, dear,
Old letters kept for many a year,
And in my grief I turn to read,
And lo! the very words I need:
“Be brave, be patient, good, and true;
We each have work that we must do.
Work on,—and as for all the rest,
We ’ll meet again when it is best.”

O dearest ! still your letters speak,
And day by day and week by week
I read them o’er and seem to feel
As if by me in presence real
Your darling self were whispering low:
“Do well,—for I would have it so.”

XLIV

A HALF-HEARD violin is sweet to hear.
It greets the ear

With pensive notes of longing tone,

As if far off and lone

Some spirit breathed itself in music's breath.

What half-heard music breathes round those whom
death

Has called away!

What pensive notes of memory stray

Across the misty years

With melody that charms away our tears!

XLV

WHAT interwoven lines link soul with soul!
What various bonds unite us all in one!
The larger love is life's eternal goal,
A deeper love is death's all-kindly sun.

And we shall live by love beyond that sea
Whose darkest billows roll upon our shore;
In love be understood; in love be free,
And understanding, learn to love the more.

And in that larger love, I hope to know,
Dear Heart, a deeper, wider love for thee,—
For thou hast shown me first the radiant bow
That arches o'er our life's deep, restless sea.

XLVI

TO know that death is near,
And still have grace to smile;
To do full labor here
Though every little while
Death's messengers proclaim
By certain word and sign
Their awful master's name;
In silence to confine
All brooding thoughts within,
That others' lives be bright;
To live as free from sin
As day is free from night;
At last to fall asleep
As children go to rest,—
Though loved ones wake to weep,—
Is after all the best.

XLVII

FROM where my city windows lie
I see one lonely patch of blue:
The sweep of wide, horizoned sky
Is bricked and walled from out my view.

Yet oft I think of ships at sea
Beneath a cloud-swept, arching dome;
Or circled hills with rock and tree,
Around my boyhood's distant home.

Our walls of being bar away
An arching sky that others know;—
Yet we, set free some solemn day,
Shall see the full sky's radiant glow.

XLVIII

SOMETIMES oppressed with toil and care,
And hating noise and din,
I leave the crowded thoroughfare,
To find a church, and enter in.

A holy twilight fills the place
With sweet and solemn light:
Mayhap an angel's carven face
Looms calmly fair upon my sight.

Mayhap the organ, sweet and low,
Plays chords I love to hear;
So, seated there, I feel I know
A richer music for an inner ear.

O dear, dear love,—oppressed with care,
And hating noise and din,
I left the crowded thoroughfare,
And found your love, and entered in.

And sweet and low the music played;
I saw an angel's face;
And over all my being strayed
A light no gloom can e'er displace.

Ad Miriam

O rich and sweet and good and true,—
The streets are dark to-day;
I cannot find the place I knew,
Nor hear the full, rich music play!

XLIX

THE hurrying, brute, unmeaning crowd,
The thousand faces marked with earth,
Strike on my mind like voices loud:

“Does aught in life have lasting worth?”

“The sea of birth up-tosses men
Upon a beach of chance and fate;
The tides of death draw back again
All living things to nature's state.”

“What hope of aught God-made and high,
Of visioned hope and angel-dreams,
In all these millions born to die,
To die—if life is what it seems?”

But oh! in all that crowd, each soul,
However brute and low it be,
Knows love,—and love uplifts the whole
To touch high God's eternity!

L

ONE summer day,—delightful day!
But day forever dead,—
We drove along a country way
With blue skies overhead.

And in a pasture, rough and wild
With low-set bush and thorn,
Saw roses sweet as if some child
Had tended them each morn.

We knew that once, long years ago,
A happy home was there,—
Because of which these roses grow
With neither love nor care.

Dear love,—within my broken heart
A sweet, sweet memory grows
Untouched by self-deceit or art,
And sweet as any rose.

LI

ABOVE the west the evening star
Has shown its glorious light,
And there in radiance, bright and far,
It ushers in the night.

If over earth no night were thrown,
The stars that fill the sky
With fires of God would rest unknown,
Unseen by human eye.

Perhaps if over life no grief
Had thrown its solemn pall
We scarce could know the bright belief
Of largest life for all.

LII

I PRAY thee, dear,
Be near me here,
In spite of carelessness and sin.
Whate'er I do,—deep-shrined within,
Where love should be,
Is love of thee.

By sun and star
I stray afar
By lonely swamp and mountain crest,
Yet always leave my love at rest
Where love should be,
Adoring thee.

LIII

THE Hindoo sage,—so stories tell,—
Can speed his soul at will,
While motionless and still
His form is deep in slumber's spell.

Last night, dear Love, I talked with thee,
And praised thy comely face,
And praised thy woman's grace,—
All-glad thou wert again with me.

Perhaps the borderland of death
Is close to gentle sleep,
And we a trysting keep,
Set free from earth by slumber's breath.

LIV

GOOD-night, good-night.
The world is dark and cold;
Dark shadows must enfold
Us both till morning light.

Till morning light,
Till morning light appear,
Good-night, good-night, my dear,
Good-night, good-night.

LV

WITH gentle heart and kind
She loved the flowers and oft would find
A blessedness and rest
In welcoming each petalled guest
With all that love can lend
To welcoming a friend.

The pleasant field that lies,
Unseen by her with mortal eyes,
Before her country grave,
Has all the flowers that nature gave
To perfume all the air
And make the landscape sweet and fair.

Her soul is like a flower
God tended here in sun and shower;
And when in beauty dressed,
He took the flower and made it blessed
By taking it to be
With Him through all eternity.

LVI

WHEN I shall come to die
 It is my wish to lie
 With her upon the hill
 Where all is sweet and still;
 To be where meadows are,
 With purple hills afar;
 To be where woodlands rise
 To meet the sunset skies;
 To be where once I knew
 No skies but skies of blue;
 To lie there side by side
 With her who is my bride,—
 For whom my love shall live
 As long as God shall give
 Me being,—here or there,—
 On earth or anywhere.
 With her I wish to be
 When death shall set me free;
 With her my dust should lie
 When I shall come to die.

LVII

I BUILT me a castle of air
With gate of cloud and turret of dreams
And banner that caught the sunrise gleams;
I filled it everywhere
With melody of song
From harps the wandering winds caress
And made the very air express
A music sweet and long.
I placed on a throne of gold
My own dear Princess sweet and true,
And I knelt before as a knight should do,
And I sang of the manifold
Delights of the days of yore.
I dreamed that my castle would stand for aye,
My castle that lasted only a day;
And now evermore
I seek in the land of dreams
For the music that once was everywhere
Filling and thrilling my castle in air
Bright with the sunrise gleams.

LVIII

THE mad, wild grief goes by,
For Time with healing touch
Availleth much,
Yet heavy sorrows lie
Upon the lonely heart
With grief that lives unsaid,
With tears unshed
For life's divinest part.

LIX

WHAT if, at times, I sink in black despair!
It is but weariness and nothing more.
I rise again, and rise in purer air,
And know that love exists as once before.

It must be true that sensual love shall die,
That earth's creative force shall claim its own;
There is a love so sweet, so pure, so high,
That it belongs to lasting life alone.

In after-life that love will grow more sweet,
Set free from all the former bonds of clay;
And then it is that life will be complete
When it is lived in purest love's sweet way.

LX

UPON her door we hung a wreath of white
With tiny flowers that swayed at every breath,
That every passer-by might read aright:

“Within this house there is no fear of death.”

We hoped the pretty, wind-swept flowers would say:

“There is no death; this thing is merely change;
It is the growth of life in God’s good way,
And not a fearful ending, dread and strange.

“We mourn because awhile we lose our friend

Whose ways were sweet, whose face was good to see;
We do not think a human life can end;
We do not think our love can cease to be.”

LXI

I THINK she stood beside us while we wept,
And wished that she might dry our tears away;
I think she wondered how her body slept;
I think she stood and heard us moan and pray.

I think her arms were clasped about us there;
I think she knew at last and understood,
And joined with us in humble, simple prayer,
And knew full more than we that God is good.

I think this true: but how it all could be
I do not know nor do I need to know;
Yet in the best and wisest books, I see
The best and wisest men have thought it so.

LXII

AT first they may not understand;
Perhaps they try to speak,
Or touch with airy hand
Each tear-stained cheek.

They have the form their beings need
And not a form like ours;
On wings of light they speed
With new-found powers.

Perhaps they meet still further change
As power grows within,
And ever wider range
From fear and sin.

We do not know,—but this we know,
When things are understood:
The high succeeds the low;
God's ways are good.

LXIII

IF I could but recall
Each thoughtless word and deed,
What touch of peace would fall
Upon me in my need!

O sweet and gentle face,—
O loving heart and kind,—
What sympathy and grace
For me in every mind!

I see the lamp-light glow
Upon you in the hall;
I feel your love, and know
You wait to hear my call.

I pray forgiveness, dear!
My books I'd throw away
If I could bring you near
And have you here to-day.

You should not sit apart;
I could not read alone;
I 'd sit with you, dear Heart,
And have you all my own.

Ad Miriam

Whate'er the work to do
You should not be denied;
How sweet to work with you
Forever at my side.

LXIV

WE loved the valley and the hills,
The pleasant, winding road,
The sleepy peace and charm that fills
The place where summers glowed
Upon our love. The sky was blue,
The landscape green and fair,—
The world was always young and new
When she and I were there.
For us the cattle stood at gaze,
For us the river gleamed,
For us alone the summer days
Gave light and warmth; it seemed
That nature gave her sweetest grace
To every flower and tree:
Sweetheart, the charm was in thy face
And all was due to thee.

LXV

IF sometime she had won high fame
Or prizes wrought in gold,
Or promise of a lasting name,
My tongue could not have told
My leaping sense of joy and pride;
Yet now it well may be
I should not grieve that she has died.
Perchance if I could see
What untold freedom she has gained,
What breadth of life acquired,
My cheeks with tears would be unstained,
My heart with joy be fired;
And I should feel my pulses beat
In gladness at the thought
That now her life is full and sweet
With joys that death has wrought.

LXVI

SHOULD not the eyes of those who go before
 Regard our life as death?
Shut in by walls of clay and death's dark door
 We die at every breath.

The larger, finer life is here unknown,—
 A larger life so bright
That all the joys that human lives have shown
 Are joys deep-veiled in night.

Euripides the Greek in days of old,
 Whose thought sped deep and high,
Declared that life's great reach of sunrise gold
 Begins but when we die.

LXVII

I THINK no life can die,
However mean and low,—
In sea, or earth, or sky,
Wherever it may grow.

Each life is one bright spark
Struck hot from God's own heart;
No life can e'er grow dark
In which God plays a part.

The gropers in the slime,
Though lower in degree
By boundless depths of time,
Are still linked close with me.

We do not dream too much
In dreaming they may grow:
We rose ourselves from such
A span or two ago.

Life's chances overawe
And bend us down in prayer,
For growth is God's great law
On earth or elsewhere.

Ad Miriam

Yet if the brute should die,
I trust at least that men,
Whose souls can look on high,
Shall wake, shall live again.

Man's skilful hands control
What once made men aghast;
He toils and builds his soul—
Imperial force and vast.

Man's godlike self gives hope
That men in God's great eye
Are not like worms that grope,
And surely shall not die.

Yet I at least have trust
All life is linked with mine;
That God throughout is just,
And all that lives divine.

LXVIII

HOW various are the dreams of men!
Some dream the life of sense is all;
They list to Folly's maddened call
Until their dust is dust again.

Some toil and plot for gleaming gold;
They heap up piles that sons shall waste
In mad debauch with gambler's haste;—
And thus they toil and thus grow old.

Each man pursues a phantom form
That beckons onward day by day,
That flies before him on life's way
In youth and sunshine, age and storm.

But one bright dream is that of seers
Who think all life is bound in one,
That conscious life is never done,
That everywhere God's life appears,

That life is one progressive whole,
That he who longs to gain more light,
Who makes his nature sweet and bright,
Shall be through death a living soul.

LXIX

IF that which is beyond belief
Be true and we shall meet no more,
If souls are matter,—still my grief
Shall find its solace as before.

If all creation be but brute,
If sun and star be chance alone,
If what we call God's voice be mute,
If naught but witless force be known,

What then! I live with conscious mind
That holds a memory sweet and dear,—
And memory's power, by love refined,
Can daily bring my lost love here.

I see the brown and golden hair,
The dear brown eyes with tender light,
The cheeks so flushed and rosy-fair,
The lips I long to kiss to-night.

I hear the voice in sweet old song,
I see the head that turns aside,—
Ah me! in every nerve I long
To touch my darling and my bride!

Ad Miriam

My memory calls a thousand days
Again to life;—we ride and walk
By o'erhung, scented, country ways,
And lie in flowers to dream and talk.

We move among the woods and think
That all earth's beauty meets in One
Whose Self is like a living link
Between all things,—or man or sun.

If that bright dream was merely dream
My mind can still retain the bliss
We caught by many a wandering stream—
The love-lit eyes, the ardent kiss,

The fact we loved each other more
The more the years gave happy light,
The whole bright love now gone before,
And gone, some say, to endless night.

O whirling atom world of force!
Unguided, meaningless machine
Without a soul or destined course!
(Some say, whose minds are quick and keen.)

The while I live I have her soul
As if companion to my thought,
And when fate's waves shall o'er me roll
All joy or grief shall be as naught.

While life exists love will not end
Nor Hope's great fountains cease to sing:
O Love, in life or death a friend
Whate'er the unknown future bring!

LXX

SHE left the coarser life of sense behind
To enter on the larger life of mind,
Not cribbed within the binding walls of clay
But free to move in life's supremest way.
The life of sense mayhap but trains the soul
To move unto an intellectual goal,
An ever-rising round of noblest mind
That far surpasses us, though same in kind.

And yet I think, in spite of all so sweet,
Her better life would still be incomplete
Except she shared the narrow life I lead
And tried somewhat to fill my daily need,
That I so oft express with heartfelt prayer,
Of deepest love and sweetest, fondest care.

LXXI

THE thought of death has lost its sting,—
For once I feared to die;
Somewhat less strongly do I cling
To things that near me lie.

If death ends all, I lose my woe,
Deep-drowned in Lethe's tide
Where neither she nor I shall know,
Though lying side by side.

If not:—I leap to higher life
Where not a doubt is mine
That she will say—oh, truest wife—
“I am forever thine!”

LXXII

NO poet tells of love more true,
No poet sings of faith more sweet,
Than that sweet love and faith I knew,
That naught on earth can now repeat.

Oh, sweet and true and dear wert thou,
Oh, dear and true and sweet to me,
And I cannot forget thee now
When deepest love still turns to thee.

LXXIII

IN all the bloody life that stained the past
The Mind Omnipotent might see
The better man that was to rise at last,
The better world that was to be.

The dim ghost-world that haunted savage dreams
Foretold a nobler faith and hope;
Their high-topped fires and sacrificial gleams
Gave light to souls beyond their scope.

I think that still in God's far-seeing eye
Our faith is rude and blind indeed;
But faith, though blindly, tells of truths that lie
In God's great love to meet our need.

LXXIV

THEY say no savage race is known
Where death is counted death indeed;
Where'er creation's life has flown
Hope's angels went with equal speed.

The deep, deep thoughts of men are true,
For all the world can scarce be wrong;
Beyond our sight the skies are blue,
Beyond our silence lies the song.

LXXV

GOD'S force creates the worlds anew,
And restless, tireless, born of might,
It builds with atoms hid from view,
And builds with stars beyond the night.

A thousand æons mark His breath;
Ourselves are built from forms we scorn;
The world of matter knows no death;
All things must change and rise new-born.

God's force will mould us to His will;
Eternal change will mark our course;
Our living selves will all fulfil
The law of life's creative force.

No part of us shall surely die,
But, changed, again shall move, be free,
Shall feel the warmth from deepest sky,
Shall know the reach of widest sea.

LXXVI

I THINK of some cathedral pile
With Gothic arch and lofty spire,
And dim-lit, censer-scented aisle,
And altars lit with deathless fire.

My thoughts climb high with storied stone;
My soul forgets the outer air,
And there in God's great house alone
Kneels down perforce in humble prayer:

"Give me, O God, the simple soul
Of them who built this house of thine;
In their sweet faith let me enroll
This deeply throbbing heart of mine."

"Make all my thoughts, like this great spire,
Point up to thee in realms above;
Help me to kindle deathless fire
And yield an incense sweet with love."

"I think the builders builded true,
For life itself points up to thee;
The hope the loving builders knew,
Confirm, O God, confirm in me."

LXXVII

ONE thought the world has kept
From darkest ages down to now;
We know not whence it came nor how,
But while the planets swept

Above an infant race
That scarce could claim a living soul,
The thought that death but makes life whole
Had found abiding place.

Of shadow-life they dreamed,
But never dreamed of death alone;
They felt that grief that made men moan
Was not the thing it seemed.

That thought we cherish still,
Made strong by time and our belief
That widespread thought that quiets grief
Is God's eternal will.

The thing the dim past knew
We cherish still and hold it so;
We cherish still and trust we know
Man's changeless thought is true.

LXXVIII

I CANNOT think what life can be
Beyond the world I know.
I touch and taste and hear and see,
And where the roses grow
I love to breathe their fragrant breath.
My human senses tell
Of naught within the realm of death.
Mayhap indeed 't is well
We do not know the wealth that lies
Beyond our time and space.
We dwell beneath our kindly skies,
A happy, toiling race,
And when our time shall come to sail
To lands that lie afar,
We go as seekers of the Grail
Beneath the morning star.

LXXIX

THE life beyond must be a life of mind,
In which that inner life we call the soul
Is set so free and lives so unconfined
That life must seem most joyous, new, and whole.

I cannot think our senses will remain;
I cannot think our human forms will stay;
And yet I think there must be joy and pain
And something like to sense, in higher way.

If aught exists then love will live, set free
From every touch of earth, made sweet and high,
A strange, mysterious bond, and we shall be
As those who live and love and will not die.

LXXX

HER body lies afar
Where dawning light and morning star
Rejoice a silent land;
And in her pale, unmoving hand
She holds my roses still.
Before her shrine on that old hill
My pilgrim thought kneels low.
Her dust is sacred—yet I know,
With ardent, thankful prayer,
Her better self is elsewhere.

LXXXI

IF it can be,
The heart I loved and knew
Is still as sweet and true
And visits me.

I may not know
Communion dear and sweet,
But still my thoughts repeat,
"She whispers low."

So let me live
As in her presence still,
And duty will fulfil.
What she would give.

LXXXII

THE universe displays creative mind,—
And few are they who dare suppose
All else beyond ourselves is dumb and blind,
And ours the only mind that knows.

I feel there is a moving heart of things,
A mind that comprehends the all,
And from that life our own life springs,
And neither it nor we can fall.

I see the cosmic life forever grow,
And all material bow to thought;
Thus viewing force and man, I feel I know
In what direction God has wrought.

A Spirit moves a world of force and law,
And likest God, man has control
Of forces vast and dread that can not awe
The ever-living, potent soul.

The bright first morning stars prepared the way
Till out of darkness came the light,
And man,—who wills like God,—yet kneels to pray,
Will not go down to endless night.

Ad Miriam

In all created past we read design,
A steady growth that does not end,
And he is dull whose mind does not divine
That higher life to which the æons tend.

How useless, weak, and vain is this my grief,
The doubt in spite of all I see;
And yet the tears and sorrow bring relief,
Dear Heart, until I meet with thee.

LXXXIII

WHEN Sadness drops her veil
O'er many a bitter tear,
And Sorrow, wan and pale,
Would close enfold me here,

Then Memory, sweet and bright,
Lays rosy cheek to mine
Till with my tear-stained sight
I see the sweet stars shine.

LXXXIV

I SAW an Arctic sky
Refulgent in the summer glow
With purple and with gold
And colors manifold
Light up a dreary realm of snow
Where nature seemed to die.

So love, divine and sweet,
The woman-love that all men need,
Lights up each dreary day
That else were cold and gray,
And lacking love were bare indeed
And wholly incomplete.

LXXXV

I WAIT in patience, knowing all is well,
For she is safe, where'er she be;
The days and weeks are trumpet tones that tell
The way to where she waits for me.

I pray that her sweet soul may help to raise
This darker, coarser soul of mine,
That her sweet self may still in woman's ways
Lead me each day toward things divine.

LXXXVI

I STUMBLED blindly through the snow
That dreary, awful day,
And those around who let me go
Made free my dreary way.

Alone with biting winds that blow,
With hilltops wan and gray,
Till nature's sense of peace might grow
Where shattered vision lay.

Like distant music sweet and low,
Far-heard by those who stray,
Her living self I learned to know
And turned aside to pray.

LXXXVII

I DO not know that we shall meet again,
I do not know and no one knows,
For veils of darkness hide from eyes of men
The stars that rise beyond life's close.

But this I know: that she was good and sweet,
That life to her meant smiles for me,
That all her happy days were made complete
By deeds that held us all in fee.

I know she made her daily living good,
Forgot herself and made more bright
This world of ours by doing all she could
For us before the last good-night.

I know I love her sweet, unselfish soul,
I know I hold each memory dear,
And till the last deep shadows o'er me roll
That I shall love and bless her here.

LXXXVIII

HER voice rang sweet in many a hymn,
Rang sweet and clear,
And carried me to times far-off and dim
When men by great cathedrals paused to hear
The morning songs arise
And spread their music o'er a pleasant land,
As kindly skies
Give light to vales adorned by nature's hand.
How sweet her voice arose!
How resonant and strong!
Within my memory still there flows
Her melody of song.
And all her life was song to me,
A sweet, sweet song of youth
Whose echoes nevermore can flee,
For they are beauty, they are truth;
And deep within my heart,
With many a thrill,
Her soul's divinest part,
Her better voice, is ringing still.

LXXXIX

THE things she knew are doubly dear,—
The rooms her hands arranged,
The green-leafed plants she loved to rear,
The whole mute house unchanged,—
Unchanged! unchanged indeed!—ah, no!
For once where beauty lay,
Where happy songs sweet-heard and low
Filled all the happy day,
Is now a dreadful calm and rest;
The slow-ticked moments drag
As if the minutes made request
That time itself should lag.
And yet I love the lonely place
With all that here belongs:
O happy place! it knew her face,
It heard her happy songs.

XC

YOUR birthday comes again,
And oh! how clear your face appears!
How sweet and calm beyond my tears!
O sweet and calm as when
Our lives were linked in one,
As when your faith gave heart to me
And all my life was but to be
With you from sun to sun.
I cannot understand,
I cannot read myself aright;
The threads are twisted, black and white,
By fate's relentless hand.
But you at least I knew,
A heart in which my faith was deep,
A love that could its sweetness keep,
A soul divinely true;
With you were peace and rest,
And sweet content and goodly cheer.
O Sweetheart! live in me each year
And lead unto the best!
When all is understood
I think that love holds master-sway,
And we shall know some glorious day
That all is somehow good.

XCI

I WATCH the steamers calm and strong
Float grandly out to sea;
They float and go the while I long
For faith to pilot me.

I know indeed we all must go
Across the boundless deep
When after heart-beats soft and low
We gently fall asleep.

I feel assured one waits me there
Beyond the mystic wave,
But oh for chart and pilot's care
And hands to reach and save !

XCII

WE stayed at home that last sweet night,
The last home-night forever,
And laughed and talked in converse light
Nor dreamed that we must sever.

Her busy fingers plied the thread,
The lamp-light o'er her falling,
The while from many a book I read
With pleasure past recalling.

And while I watched she read in turn
With voice like music seeming,
That now with all my heart I yearn
To hear if but in dreaming.

And so we talked with converse light
Nor dreamed that we must sever;
We laughed and kissed and said good-night,
The last home-night forever.

XCIII

THERE was a time, Sweetheart, long months ago,
While wooded hills and vales between us lay,
That I was sad for thee, though not in woe
As now when death's great barrier bars the way.

I longed, Sweetheart, for thee, and yet I knew
That you were safe beyond the hills afar.
I looked upon the evening's depth of blue
And thought: "Mayhap she sees my evening star."

O darling one, this verse that I do write
Must reach across whatever lies between.
You live, and so I send you love to-night,
My love and prayer for thee in worlds unseen.

XCIV

IN a valley that laughed in summer and sun
In the glorious and beautiful days long ago,
When knights were careering and tourneys were run,
A goodman learned much of God's joy and woe.

For once long before, on a morn he had prayed:

“O Lord, in summer and sun all goeth so well
I hope not for Heaven nor of Hell am afraid;
Teach me, O Lord, thy Heaven and Hell.”

And the Lord's white angel, her robing of flame
And her garment of beauty all put aside,
In the guise of a woman unto him came,
And he called her companion, sweetheart, and bride.

And her voice was sweet like the music of God,
And her hands were as gentle as angels' are,
And her face like a flower that smiles from the sod,
And her eyes were as deep as the evening star.

Then the sky was so blue and the air was so sweet,
And the roses so thick that clamber and climb,
And the joys so many that none could repeat,
That the cottage was Heaven's own self for a time.

Ad Miriam

Then the Lord's white angel her robe of flame
And her garment of beauty put on once more,—
And over the rose-hung cottage there came
A gloom and a chill with her passing the door.

And the music had gone from stream and from hill,
And the stones were rough and the ways were hard,
And the smile of the flowers had gone with the chill,
And the moon's bright face was clouded and barred.

And the goodman sat and he moaned alone,
And he wept with a grief that none might tell,
For Heaven is love of our own heart's own,
And the absence of Heaven, O Lord, is thy Hell.

XCV

WITHIN the singing woods I lie
Beside the crooked, tumbling stream,
And o'er me hangs the blue, blue sky
That leads to reverie and dream,

What peace and calm in this retreat
Remote from far-off city ways!
Where woodland voices all repeat
Unceasing chants of love and praise!

Dear God! I love thy forest home,
Thy sunshine in among the trees,
Thy mighty temple's blue, blue dome,
Thy choral chants from brook and breeze.

And once a soul there dwelt with me
Whose presence brought me peace and rest
By city ways or woodland tree,
Where'er I was, and made me blest.

In thought of her these woods are dear;
In them I half can feel her hand;
In them at times her voice I hear,
And partly, dimly understand.

XCVI

O VIOLET and wind-swept leaf of Spring!
There was a time I loved thee more !
A shadow veileth everything,
And leaves and flowers are not as once before.

The wandering breeze is damp and cold,
And clouds hide half the depth of sky ;
Spring's song of love remains untold,
And dreary nature chants that all must die.

But once not so—O happy day
When sweet, returning warmth gave birth
To little leaves that leaped in play
And gladdened me and all the wide, wide earth.

For then one stood and loved with me
The sweet fresh air and teeming sod ;
I felt a soul in every tree
And hand in hand we talked of life and God.

XCVII

DEAR comrade of old days,
Dear soul that walked with me,
My heart must chant thy praise
In hourly memory.

My heart is all alone
In earth's monastic wall,
Within dark wood and stone,
With shadows over all.

And there it kneels full low
While thoughts like censers burn,
And none but it may know
How love for love can yearn.

XCVIII

BESIDE my door there grows
A country rose,
A clipping cut from far away
Where once in happy day
A sweet old garden lay
With many a rose.

And when we ceased to roam
And sought our home,
The roses gave us welcome there,
And perfumed all the air,
With fragrance everywhere
About our home.

But now there is no flower
To bloom each hour,
Though yet, some brighter day, I know,
That here as long ago
Full many a rose shall grow
To bless each hour.

The winters fill with dread
And make like dead
My country rose that seems to die
While winds are rough and high,
But under brighter sky
It is not dead.

Ad Miriam

The one who planted thee,
Dear rose, can see
Like thee God's gift of life is sweet,
Though seeming incomplete,
So changing and so fleet,
So sad to see.

You too may miss the touch
That meant so much
Alike to thee and me each day,—
The soft and gentle way,
Dear rose,—now gone for aye,—
That meant so much.

Lift high your blossoms, dear,
And let us here
With more of sweetness and of light
Make all our world be bright
Till winter and dark night
Shall greet us here.

XCIX

IN sweet old tales of mystic lore,
Of knights and castles long ago,
Of tourneys and bright deeds of yore,
Of flashing swords and questings to and fro,
Of maiden knights and hearts of fire,
I read of those who journeyed far
By moated wall and wattled byre,
By pleasant summer sun and winter star,
Whose hearts were filled with love of one
For whose dear love they rode afield,
And in whose grace their deeds were done,
And in whose name their conquered foe must yield.
They knew a guiding heart and hand,
A life for which they dared to live;
They fought afar in many a land
For one to whom they gave what love could give.
O sweet my love, for thee I go
On quests, for thee I strive and do,
And in my heart of hearts I know
My constant guiding soul is thought of you.

C

OUR wedding music rings from long ago
 Its old sweet march of love—
 The old sweet march that all my years shall know,
 Whose notes still sound above
 The coarser chords of life and give relief
 When days are dark and drear,
 When passion storms in madness and in grief,
 And doubts grow into fear.
 The music sounds afar—O sweet! O sweet
 Is memory's treasured note,
 The melody of voices that repeat
 Themselves, whose echoes float
 Across the years. The richer life is best,
 The life that loves the past
 With all the melodies that made it blest,
 The life that hopes at last
 To hear again the voices gone to-day,
 To know the sweeter soul
 One loved,—as if from some much-wearied way
 One sought the sea for goal,
 The summer sea with reach of misty blue
 Beneath a blue-arched sky,
 And there in its vast reach and sweeping view
 Felt God Himself was nigh.
 We can not yield our dead without a strife.
 Our human hearts rebel
 And fiercely long to call them back to life.
 It seems as if the knell

Ad Miriam

Had rung to all we know and love on earth ;
But still the summer sea
Is fair, and still we think God's ways have worth,
However grieved we be.
The storm and passion die away at last,
And then at length there grows,
With dew of tears besprinkled and o'ercast,
Sweet memory's sweetest rose.
We live and love, and hold our faith, and hear
A sweeter music rise,
For God still voices on our inner ear:
"There is no soul that dies."

*THE blue waves dance and the wind blows free,
And over the billows I go afar,
For I sail on a wide wide sea
With never a reef nor bar.*

*With morning's beam the waves are a gleam,
And the air is strong and free,
And nought is more sweet, I deem,
Than sailing the wide wide sea.*

*For I love the measureless space of the deep
With never a reef nor bar,
And I love the salt spray's sweep,
As I sail and sail afar.*

*But oh for the light of home at last
Where love is await for me,
When over the sweep of the vast
I come from the wide wide sea!*



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